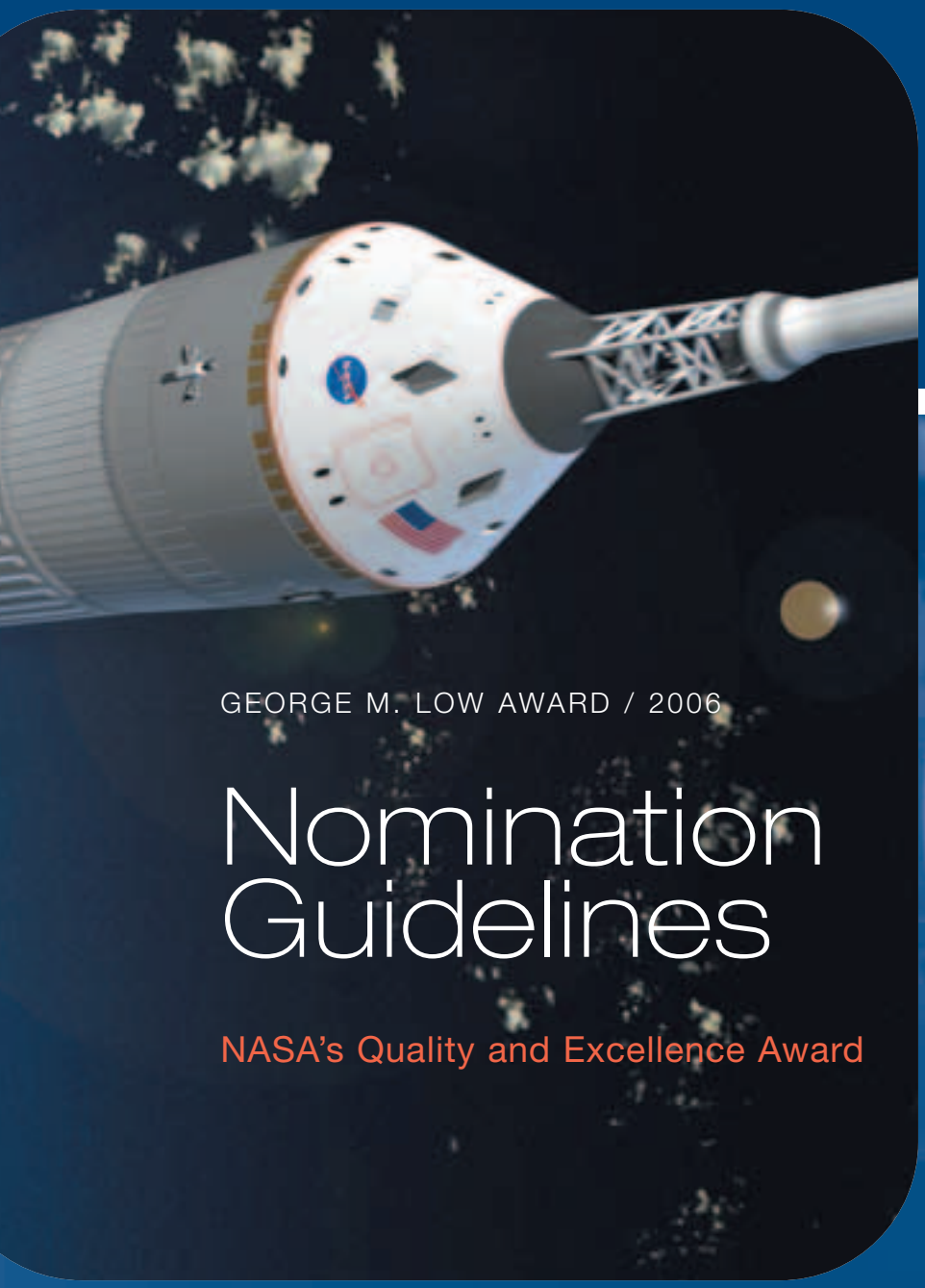
National Aeronautics and Space Administration



"When I think of excellence, I think of people more than things because only people can bring quality, excellence, perfection to things that must work. It is in that light that we achieved the Apollo landings on the Moon."

—GEORGE M. LOW

GEORGE M. LOW AWARD / 2006

Nomination Guidelines

NASA's Quality and Excellence Award

March 2 3, 2006
Hilton Alexandria Mark Center

www.nasa.gov

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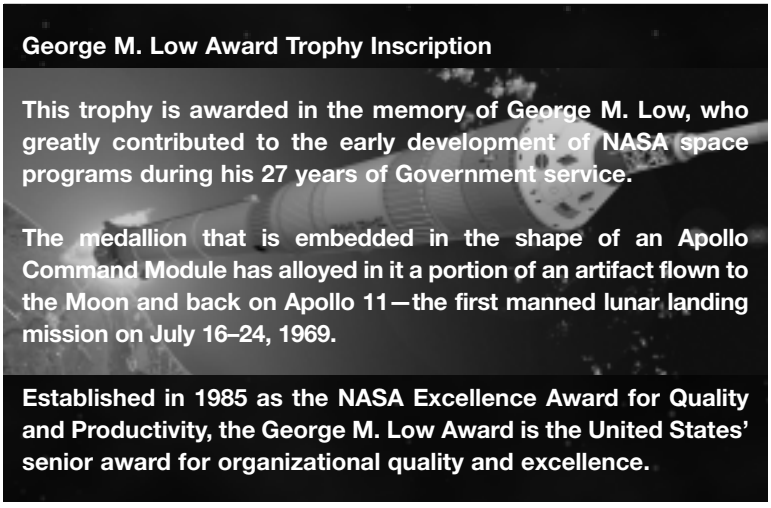
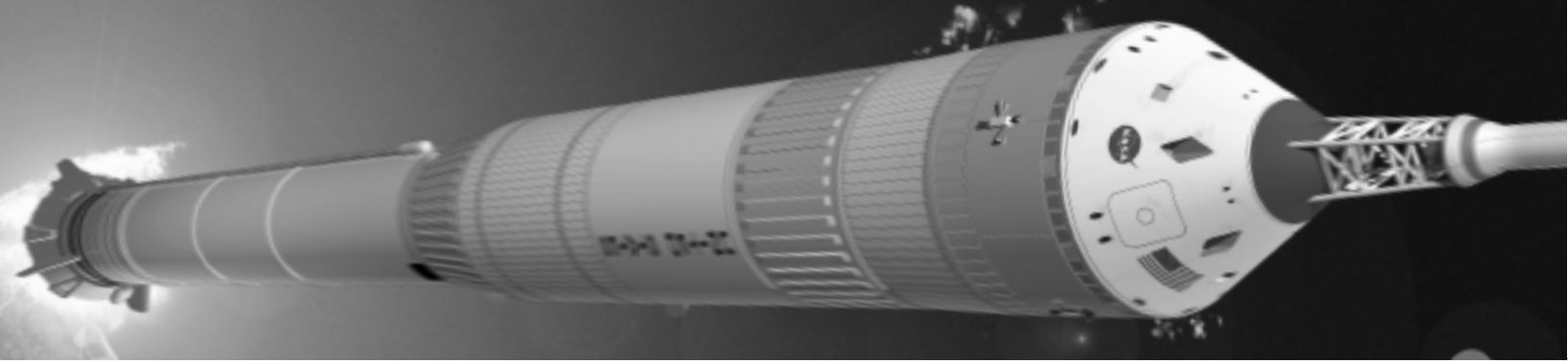


George M. Low Award Trophy Inscription

This trophy is awarded in the memory of George M. Low, who greatly contributed to the early development of NASA space programs during his 27 years of Government service.

The medallion that is embedded in the shape of an Apollo Command Module has alloyed in it a portion of an artifact flown to the Moon and back on Apollo 11—the first manned lunar landing mission on July 16–24, 1969.

Established in 1985 as the NASA Excellence Award for Quality and Productivity, the George M. Low Award is the United States' senior award for organizational quality and excellence.



George M. Low was dedicated to quality and excellence. His career and achievements spanned many fields—space science, aeronautics, technology, and education. As an engineer, mathematician, scientist, NASA Director and Deputy Administrator, Chairman of the National Research Council, and President of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, his achievements were legendary. In the space program, he provided management and direction for the Mercury, Gemini, Apollo, and advanced piloted mission programs.

George M. Low advanced through NASA management on the strength of his extraordinary quality-embedded achievements. His progress to prominence made him a role model in the sight of all with whom he came in contact. He was a man with a vision—a vision shared by many who also dreamed that America should lead the way in astronautics and aeronautics. George M. Low stretched the boundaries of excellence; by his example, others are motivated to do the same.

For additional information, contact:

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I. Purpose

The George M. Low (GML) Award is NASA's premier quality performance award for NASA's prime contractors and subcontractors. The presentation of the GML Award signifies NASA's recognition that the award recipient has demonstrated excellence and outstanding technical and managerial achievements in quality and performance.

II. Nomination Responsibilities

Annually, the Agency calls for GML Award nominations from the NASA Centers, Mission Support Offices, and Mission Directorates.

Mission Directorates

- The Mission Directorates and the Office of Safety and Mission Assurance will assure that all nominations from the Mission Directorates and the Centers fully comply with the eligibility requirements and nomination specifications outlined in this booklet.

- Mission Directorates may submit to the Office of Safety and Mission Assurance no more than one nominee from each category from all their contracts and agreements.

Centers

- Centers will nominate candidates for the GML Award. Nominations will be submitted to the GML Award Program in the Office of Safety and Mission Assurance and a copy to the appropriate Mission Directorate.

- Prior to submitting nominations to the Office of Safety and Mission Assurance, Centers must forward, via e-mail, a list of the companies they wish to nominate to the other Centers along with a brief justification for the nomination. The other Centers shall provide any appropriate information to the nominating Center concerning the merit of the nominations prior to the nominating Center recommending a nominee to their respective Mission Directorate.

- In the event that more than one Center plans to nominate a contractor that has contracts with multiple Centers, the Centers must select a lead Center that will submit the nomination with inputs from the other Centers. This fact must be noted in the lead page, as defined in Section III, Format Requirements.

- Each Center shall submit no more than one nominee for each category. Nominations will be submitted to the respective Center's managing Mission Directorate and the Office of Safety and Mission Assurance.

Mission Support Offices

- Mission Support Offices may nominate candidates for the GML Award.

- Mission Support Offices' nominations will be submitted to the GML Award Program, ATTN: Office of Safety and Mission Assurance, for referral to the Review Council.

- Prior to submittal to the Office of Safety and Mission Assurance, Headquarters Mission Support Offices will assure that all nominations comply with the eligibility requirements and nomination specifications outlined in this booklet.

- The Office of Safety and Mission Assurance will forward the list of proposed nominees to Center quality management associates for input, as appropriate, concerning the merit of the nomination.

III. Format Requirements

- The cover of the nomination (not to exceed one page) will include the following:
  - A brief description of the company;
  - The award category and classification in which the organization is being nominated;
  - Nominating Center (If more than one NASA Center is participating in the nomination, the lead as well as the participating Centers will be noted.);
  - Information demonstrating the company's qualifications for the identified category and classification;
  - The number of employees in the company and the number of employees dedicated to NASA contracts;
  - The full name, title, address, telephone number, facsimile number, and e-mail address of the highest ranking member of the organization and the company's GML Award point of contact or action officer; and
  - A complete list of the company's NASA contracts, their value, and the corresponding NASA Center for each contract. (Companies will be evaluated on the basis of all their NASA contracts.)

- Nominations will be a total of no more than seven pages in length, plus the cover page described above, table of contents, and a glossary if needed. Nomination text and figures will be typed using a minimum font size of 10 points.

- In addition to 20 hard copies, 1 copy of the nomination sent to the Office of Safety and Mission Assurance must be in electronic format.

- The nomination must follow the sequence and address each of the six criteria listed in Appendix B—Evaluation Factors. If a company does not believe that one of the criteria is germane to its business, a clear reason must be provided.

- Nominations that do not meet the eligibility and format requirements will not be considered.

IV. Categories and Classifications

GML Awards are presented to one outstanding company in each of the following categories and classifications:

Large Business
Product*
Service

Small Business
Product*
Service

V. Eligibility Requirements

All NASA prime contractors and subcontractors, in good standing with NASA, are eligible to be nominated for the GML Award in the category that reflects their status at the time of the application submittal. Only one nomination for each independently operating business unit of a company will be eligible (for example, a unit of a corporation that reports to a corporate president). The following requirements must be fulfilled:

Requirements for Large Businesses

- Aggregate NASA-related sales for the previous 3 years should exceed $1 million, with at least $250,000 in each of the preceding 3 years, or a minimum of at least 50 percent of total sales that are related to NASA.
- There shall be a minimum of 50 full-time employees engaged in NASA-related work for each of the preceding 3 years.
- A nominated element of a larger corporation shall function as an independently operating, self-sustaining profit center that also adheres to independent financial reporting.

Requirements for Small Businesses (Federal requirements for a small, small disadvantaged, or women-owned small business apply.)

- Aggregate NASA-related sales for the 3 preceding years shall exceed $250,000, or the organization should have a minimum of at least 50 percent of total sales that are NASA related.
- There shall be a minimum of 25 full-time employees with at least one-third of the employees engaged in NASA-related work.

* *A product can be hardware, software, research, and/or technology development. Contact GML Award Program Manager for further guidance if needed.*

VI. Process Participants

Review Council

The Review Council is composed of representatives from each Mission Directorate, as well as the Centers and Headquarters Mission Support Offices submitting nominations.

The Review Council evaluates the candidates submitted for the GML Award by the Centers and the Headquarters Mission Support Offices to verify eligibility and assess the candidates according to the GML evaluation factors (Appendix B). Then the Review Council will select up to eight finalists, with no more than two in any one category, and forward the results of the selection to the Validation Board Site Visit Team for consideration. Finalists selected by the Review Council receive a site visit.

On a case-by-case basis, without violating the spirit of the GML Award program and by consensus, the Review Council has latitude to deviate from a strict interpretation of the eligibility requirements.

Validation Board Site Visit Team

The Validation Board Site Visit Team is composed of five or more members, which may include a representative from each Mission Directorate and additional members from the Centers and/or the Headquarters Mission Support Offices. The Chief of Safety and Mission Assurance may select additional members. The Validation Board Site Visit Team conducts onsite visits.

The purpose of the site visit is to allow Validation Board Site Visit Team members to meet the company's management and staff, observe the company's operations, and give company management an opportunity to answer questions and to clarify specific issues that surfaced in the company's nomination. Acceptance of the visit is voluntary.

The site visit will be no more than 1 day. Actual onsite time is 6 hours. The Validation Board Site Visit Team may be organized into large business and small business subteams. In addition, the Center or Headquarters Mission Support Office whose finalist is being visited is encouraged to send a representative to the site visit.

Panel of Judges

The Panel of Judges is composed of the Mission Directorate Associate Administrators, and the Chief of Safety and Mission Assurance is the chairperson. When Mission Support Office nominees are among the finalists, an Assistant Administrator from a Headquarters Mission Support Office will be appointed as an additional judge. The Panel of Judges takes the recommendations of the Validation Board Site Visit Team and forwards recommendations to the Administrator for approval.

Consultants

Although they are not members of the Panel of Judges, the Validation Board Site Visit Team, or the Review Council, other NASA offices involved in the acquisition and contract oversight process may be consulted throughout the evaluation process for relevant input. These NASA offices will include, but are not limited to, the Office of the General Counsel, the Office of the Inspector General, the Office of Procurement, the Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity, and the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization.

VII. Selection, Evaluation, and Validation Factors

Selection and Evaluation

Throughout the nomination process, GML Award candidates will be considered according to the following six nomination factors as they apply to the contractual requirements of the nominee:

1. Customer satisfaction and contract technical performance,
2. Schedule performance,
3. Cost performance,
4. Leadership and quality improvement,
5. Research and development and/or innovative technology breakthroughs, and
6. Items of special interest to NASA.

Appendix B contains more detailed information about the evaluation factors and point values that are used to assess a candidate.

Review and Validation of Nominees and Selection of Finalists

- Nominees and finalists are reviewed to ensure they are in good standing.
- The Review Council will select up to eight finalists.
- The Centers will be notified by the Mission Directorates of the Review Council's findings with respect to their nominees.
- Finalists will be notified in writing by the GML Award program manager of their status and asked if they wish to continue in the process. If so, a site visit by the Validation Board Site Visit Team will be coordinated.

Selection of Award Recipients

- Following the site visits, the Validation Board Site Visit Team recommends winners to the Panel of Judges.
- The Panel of Judges selects the winners and submits the results to the Administrator for approval.
- Award winners and finalists will be announced at the NASA-Industry Conference on Excellence.

VIII. Awards

- Winning organizations receive the George M. Low Award Trophy. The Administrator will present the GML Award Trophies at the NASA-Industry Conference on Excellence.

- The Administrator will present the George M. Low Award Finalist Plaques at the NASA-Industry Conference on Excellence. All finalists receive the GML Award Finalist Plaque.

- An award winner is ineligible to be placed in nomination again for a period of 3 years. (The start of the waiting period begins at the end of the calendar year for which it was awarded. For example, if a company won the 2005 GML Award, the 3-year waiting period would be 2006–2008, making the company eligible to reapply in 2009.)

Appendix A—Milestone Schedule

March 2006

- 2006 GML Award nomination guidelines are distributed.
- Letter from the Office of Safety and Mission Assurance opens the GML Award nomination cycle.

May 2006

- Centers assemble nominations and, as appropriate, submit the names of nominees to other Center quality management associates for comment. This activity is particularly important if a nominee has contracts with NASA Centers other than the nominating Center, in order to assure no duplication of effort.
- Mission Directorates receive and review Center nominations, and furnish their nominees' names to the GML Award Program, Office of Safety and Mission Assurance, Kelly Kabiri, on (202) 358-0590, by June 30, 2006.
- Mission Directorates and Headquarters Mission Support Offices furnish the name of their GML Award action officer to the Office of Safety and Mission Assurance, Kelly Kabiri, on (202) 358-0590, by June 30, 2006.

August 2006

- Members of the Review Council and Validation Board Site Visit Team are selected.
- The Review Council is convened. The Review Council reviews and scores all of the nominations, selects up to eight finalist candidates, and forwards the results of the selection to the GML Award Program, ATTN: Office of Safety and Mission Assurance.

September 2006–January 2007

- Finalists are notified that they will receive a site visit.
- The Validation Board Site Visit Team conducts a site visit to each finalist organization.
- The Validation Board Site Visit Team prepares its findings for the Panel of Judges.
- The Panel of Judges selects the GML Award winners, with no more than one in each category/classification combination (an exception exists for "ties"). The Panel of Judges also determines the companies that will receive a GML Award Finalist Plaque.
- The Administrator approves the selections.

March 2007

- The Administrator presents the GML Awards at the NASA-Industry Conference on Excellence.

Appendix B—Evaluation Factors

During the nomination/evaluation/screening process, the Centers and the Mission Directorates will use the following nomination factors and associated objective evidence. Suggested scores for each factor and subfactor have been provided as an additional tool to assist in ranking nominees.

1. Customer Satisfaction and Contract Technical Performance (250 Points)

1.1 Customer Satisfaction (100 Points)

A. Describe the contractor's process to effectively gauge NASA's customer satisfaction (i.e., the quality, timeliness, and responsiveness of the contractor's products and services). (50)
B. Describe how effectively the contractor builds relationships and provides support to NASA in times of changing programs, schedules, and costs? (25)
C. Describe the contractor's listening and learning strategies that are used to effectively understand and anticipate NASA's needs. (25)

1.2 Contract Technical Performance and Outcomes (150 Points)

A. Describe the contractor's formally defined processes and management systems for generating performance requirements and communicating them throughout the organization. (60)
B. What is the objective evidence (award fees, other data, or records) that demonstrated NASA's high degree of satisfaction with the contractor's performance in all areas of activity over the past 3 years? (50)
C. Has the contractor instituted initiatives to improve the performance and outcome of its products and/or services, and, if so, how effective are they? (40)

2. Schedule Performance (150 Points)

A. What is the contractor's prior 3-year history of meeting schedule requirements on contracts? (The length of contracts should be considered. Outstanding results would reflect consistently positive trends.) (90)
B. Describe the contractor's process for evaluating, documenting, and distributing schedule requirements. (25)
C. Describe how responsive the contractor has been in rescheduling, work-arounds, and reprioritized work activities. (35)

3. Cost Performance (150 Points)

A. For the past 3 or more years, allowing for NASA-initiated changes, are actual costs at or below the estimated contract cost? Provide metrics showing actual costs versus planned costs for the past 3 years. (50)
B. Describe how the contractor advises NASA of pending cost changes or cost risks in a timely manner. (25)
C. What kind of cost-reduction/cost-avoidance record has the contractor demonstrated over the past 3 or more years? What specific initiatives were instituted to accomplish this? (75)

4. Leadership and Quality Improvement (225 Points)

A. Describe how effectively the contractor's senior managers involve themselves and their workforce in creating the organization's vision, mission, values, and quality policy. (25)
B. Describe the management processes and tools (i.e., capability maturity models, ISO, Six Sigma, incentives, reengineering, etc.) used to continuously improve processes and performance? Provide specific examples. (100)
C. Describe how the contractor demonstrates leadership with regard to fostering teamwork and developing a high-performing, learning organization. (50)
D. Describe how well the contractor benchmarks the processes of best-in-class organizations to determine improvement goals and measure progress toward world-class status? (20)
E. Describe how effective the contractor is in helping its subcontractors/suppliers infuse quality into their processes, products, and services. (30)

5. Research and Development and/or Innovative Technology Breakthroughs (75 Points)

Describe research and development and/or any innovative activities developed by your organization that made a special contribution to the ability of NASA to accomplish its mission. When research and development or technology breakthroughs are not part of the businesses operations, focus should be on innovative management initiatives or activities.

6. Items of Special Interest to NASA (150 Points)

This factor addresses core values and areas where NASA places special emphasis, including:

A. Describe special safety initiatives in place that underscore NASA's vital concern with safety of workforce, workplace, product, and service. Is the contractor's safety program management centered? (Does safety information, i.e., goals, performance, and incident information, flow through the normal management chain, as opposed to the safety chain?) Describe the company's safety record over the past 3 years. (75)
B. What are the diversity demographics of the contractor's workforce for the past 3 years? Describe any initiatives used to promote diversity. (25)
C. In what ways does the contractor assist NASA in meeting its goals by providing maximum practicable opportunities for small, small disadvantaged, and women-owned small businesses to participate in NASA programs? Provide metrics for the past 3 years. (25)
D. What is the contractor's scope of NASA-oriented education and outreach programs? Describe. (25)

George M. Low Award Past Recipients

2005

BTAS, Inc. (Small-Product)

SGT, Inc. (Small-Service)

QSS Group, Inc. (Large-Service)

ATK Thiokol, Inc. (Large-Product)

2004

Alliance Spacesystems, Inc. (Small-Product)

ERC, Inc. (Small-Service)

Space Gateway Support, LLC
and Titan Corporation (Large-Service)

Northrop Grumman Space Technology
(Large-Product)

2003

Marotta Controls, Inc. (Small-Product)

Lockheed Martin Space Operations, ITS
(Large-Service)

Spectrolab, A Boeing Company (Large-Product)

2002

Analytical Services & Materials, Inc. (Small-Service)

Jacobs Sverdrup
Marshall Space Flight Center Group (Large-Service)

ManTech International Corporation
Aerospace Technology Applications Center
(Large-Service)

RS Information Systems, Inc. (Small-Service)

Williams International (Small-Product)

2001

Native American Services, Inc. (Small-Service)

Raytheon ITSS (Large-Service)

Swales Aerospace (Small-Product)

2000

Advanced Technologies Incorporated (Small-Product)

The Boeing Company, Delta Launch Division
(Large-Product)

Computer Sciences Corporation, NASA Programs
(Large-Service)

Jackson & Tull, Inc., Aerospace Engineering Division
(Small-Service)

1999

Barrios Technology (Small-Product)

Kay and Associates, Inc. (Small-Service)

Raytheon Service Company (Large-Service)

Thiokol Propulsion, Space Operations
(Large-Product)

1997–98

BST Systems, Inc. (Small-Product)

Advanced Technology Company (Small-Service)

ILC Dover, Inc. (Large-Product)

AlliedSignal Technical Services Corporation
(Large-Service)

DYNCORP—Johnson Support Division
(Large-Service)

1996–97

Dynamic Engineering, Inc. (Small-Product)

Hummer Associates (Small-Service)

Boeing-Rocketdyne Propulsion & Power
(Large-Product)

Scientific & Commercial Systems Corporation
(Small-Service)

1995–96

Hamilton Standard Space Systems International
(Large-Product)

1994–95

Unisys Space Systems (Large-Service)

1992

IBM Federal Systems Company (Large-Service)

Honeywell Space and Strategic Systems Operation
(Large-Product)

1991

Grumman Technical Services Division (Large-Service)

Thiokol Space Systems (Large-Product)

1990

Rockwell Space Systems Division (Large-Product)

Marotta Scientific Controls, Inc. (Small-Product)

1989

Lockheed Engineering and Sciences Company
(Large-Service)

Rocketdyne Division, Rockwell International Corporation
(Large-Product)

1987

IBM Federal Sector Division (Large-Service)

Martin Marietta Michoud Aerospace (Large-Product)